THE

Lay-Man's Religion:

Humbly offered as a HELP to a

MODEST ENQUIRY

For every Man into his own Heart; both as being the only Means to judge and save himself, and the best way to unite us all against our Common Enemies.

Psal. 16. 2, 3. *O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, my* Goodness *extendeth not unto thee: But unto the Saints which are in the Earth, and to the* Excellent, *in whom is all my delight.*

Psal. 119. 15. *Depart from me ye Evil-doers: for I will keep the Commandments of my God.*

LONDON,

Printed by *Eliz. Holt* for *Walter Kettilby*, at the *Bishop's-Head* in St. *Paul's Church-Yard*, in the Year 1690.

Licensed,

OCTOBER, 1. 1690.

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THE

THE

LAYMAN's RELIGION,

In an affectionate *Epiſtle* to all *Mankind*.

Pſal. 30. 3. *O Lord, thou haſt brought up my ſoul from the* Grave: *thou haſt kept me alive, that I ſhould not go down to the Pit.*

Pſal. 6. 16. *Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my ſoul.*

AS there is nothing hath more occaſioned, and increaſed our Heats, Diviſions and Animoſities, than the raſh and uncharitable Cenſures, which Men of differing Perſuaſions are apt to paſs one upon another, to the great ſcandal of Religion, and encouragement of Debauchery and Immorality: So nothing in the World can ſooner heal our Breaches, reform our Manners, and unite us all among our ſelves, than an impartial Scrutiny by every Man into his own Heart and Life; ſo as firſt to give Sentence at home upon himſelf, before he adventures to cenſure or judge his Neighbour.

It is a manifeſt Truth (but a lamentable one) That as *the pure Love of God*, and *a meek Spirit* have, ever ſince Man's Fall, decayed with the increaſe of Knowledge in the generality of Mankind; great Knowledge not guarded with profound Humility, rendering Man but more like the Devil: So from the beginning of Chriſtianity, *Pride* and *Self-love* have always in a gradual Courſe joſtled out *Truth* and *Goodneſs* wherever it hath been planted, and turned the vital part of Religion into *Sophiſtry* and *Diſpute*, which begets Quarrels in Profeſſors about *Shadows* and *Circumſtantials*, whilſt they neglect the Subſtance in good Living, thereby baniſhing *Chriſtian Charity*, to make way for *Intereſt* and worldly Deſign, though under a ſpecious Vizor of *Zeal* for *Reformation*.

Now as we all agree, 'tis more eaſie to know than practiſe; ſo we muſt all allow, that when Mens Actions run counter to their Words, (though never ſo charming,) it renders their Advice (in a great meaſure) ineffectual to others, becauſe they do not follow it:

it themselves. This made St. *Paul* so careful of himself, lest while he was preaching to others, he might become a Cast-away. And that others might do so too, he left, as a standing Rule, his Advice to all, to have a peculiar regard to their own inbred, and habitual Evil, as that Clog which hinders us all in our Christian Course. Heb. 12. 1. *Let us* (saith he) *lay aside every weight, and the Sin which doth so easily beset us*, that we may the better run our Race after our Redeemer's Pattern.

By God's Grace, I am a Witness from my own Experience of this sad Truth, having been a Spectator of the many Revolutions of late among us, and one of the greatest Instances of the Divine Goodness the present Age affords, for this very end, that I should hang out my Experience, for a light to warn others from farther adventuring, either in a false Persuasion of Religion to secular ends, or in the practice of any known Sin: And therefore,

* *O Vitæ Philosophia Dux-O Virtutum Indagatrix vitiorumq; Expultrix! unus dies benè & ex præceptis tuis actus, Mille in peccato actis diebus est anteponendus*, Cic. Who would not be Religious, were he once convinced that true *Pleasure*, and real *Happiness* (which all desire) are alone to be found in a *pious*, *sober*, and *vertuous* Life. O thou only *Paradise* on Earth! well might the holy Prophet solemnly avouch, *One day in thy Courts, is better than a thousand elsewhere*, Psal.

I have here adventured to publish my weak Endeavours (as a Lay-Man's Religion) to awaken and quicken all others, whether Professors, or Profane, to leave off all farther pursuit of Shadows, and to embrace the * real Substance, that both may forsake their Idols, and return to God, from whence all such are fallen.

For though the Object of Men's *Love* and *Delight* may be different, as the one is in extreme opposite to the other, according to their different Inclination and natural Dispositions; yet both are equally guilty of moral Idolatry, as the one pursues inordinate Ambition, and Worldly Design, and the other sensual Pleasures, or lower Enjoyments; both equally robbing God of that *Love*, *Complacency*, and *Delight*, which we all owe him, as the Fountain of Good, and supreme Author of our Being.

This I shall endeavour to demonstrate in the following Discourse.

THE primary Cause of all our Evils is Sin; and to find out this Truth, we must trace it to its Original, in our first Parents Disobedience; whose Foot-steps we now tread in, when we sin after the Similitude of their Transgression, (that is) against Knowledge and Means. Their Sin was Disobedience to their known Duty, in dis-believing Truth it self, and giving Credit to the Father of Lies; forsaking God the Fountain of Good, to seek their Happiness in the Creature; by which they, and all their Posterity for ever lost Paradise in this World, and all Right and Property (farther than as Stewards accountable) in all we possess here below.

This

This is a Truth owned by all, but ſuch as are Strangers to God and themſelves; and which none can deny, but ſuch as are wilfully ignorant of God's revealed Will in the Scriptures, and unacquainted with their own inward Frame, the proper Schools for this Diſcipline.

For God hath placed in every Man's Breaſt the flaming Sword of Reaſon and Conſcience, to hinder his inordinate purſuit of Happineſs here below, and to chaſe him out of all hope of ever returning back to his earthly Paradiſe, or finding any real Satisfaction for that infinite Principle of Love and Deſire (which is the radical Affection of his Nature) in theſe lower Enjoyments.

So that the diſorder we feel within us, and all the external Miſery that befalls us from the Creatures (as Inſtruments of God's Juſtice) without us, are but the effects of our Diſobedience; and in Love deſigned for our Correction, to awaken us out of our ſenſual Security, and cauſe us to * return from purſuit of Vanity in the Creature, to God the Fountain of Happineſs from whence we fell.

Now foraſmuch as all Mankind (ſince the Fall) are naturally blind to themſelves, and partial in judging of God's Dealings with them, ever willing to excuſe themſelves: And as they follow their firſt Parents Steps in Rebellion; ſo when they ſuffer, are too apt (with them) to transferr the blame on others; *The Woman thou gaveſt me*, cries *Adam*; and when ſhe was charged, *The Serpent beguiled me*, was her Evaſion. And ſo to lay the Cauſe of all our Miſery at ſome other Door; which is in effect, to throw back all on God, as if he cauſed what he doth not prevent.

I ſhall endeavour briefly here to demonſtrate, that every Man (Saint or Sinner, *Phariſee* or *Publican*) of what Perſuaſion ſoever he be, that doth not firſt look home into his own Heart, ſo as ſeriouſly to conſider his own Ways, and judge himſelf, doth ſtill ſhare in the procuring Cauſe, which hath brought all theſe Evils upon us.

And that I may convince every Man of the Truth of this, I ſhall endeavour briefly to ſhew what are thoſe crying Sins that have cauſed all thoſe Judgments (which we either feel or fear,) that every man may the better judge himſelf how far he ſtands guilty before God and his own Conſcience therein. And thoſe Sins may be comprehended under theſe Three Heads:

I. *Avarice*; or, an inordinate Purſuit of *Mammon*.

II. *Debauchery* and *Immorality*.

III. *Ambition*, *Pride*, and *Worldly Deſign*.

I ſhall

* *Converſion* is nothing elſe but *ceaſing to do evil*, by thus *turning* from *Satan* to *God* in newneſs of Life. Which, in its effect, is *Repentance* from dead works; and *Saving Faith*, is when we do both, from a firm Belief of God's Truth, in his *Threatnings* againſt *Sin*, and in his *Promiſes* to reward *Obedience*, ſo as from thence to purifie our ſelves for his Service here, in order to partake of his Glory hereafter.

I shall begin with *Self-Love*, the Fountain of all Evil, as that which includes all the rest; and in the first place discourse of *Avarice*, or *Inordinate Love of the World.*

WEre I possess'd of the whole World, or the greatest share in it, I should be happy or miserable only, according to the *good* or *ill* Use I made of all I possess'd. It has been the great mistake of many wise Men in all Ages, to account themselves *Proprietors* of what *God* consigns to them in *Trust*, as *Stewards* only, for the Good of the great Family of Mankind, whether it be *Riches*, *Honours*, *Power*, or *Endowments of the Mind:* And when Men thus esteem all they possess their own, they assume to themselves God's Title therein, and from thence naturally draw this Inference, That *they may do with their own what they please*; either keep their Wealth lock'd up in a Chest, or lay it out according to their own Humour and Fancy; in building a delightful Palace, and pulling it down, when they have done; in the purchase of empty Titles of Honour; or, in prodigally treating and obliging the Grandees of the World; or lavishly consuming it in *Luxury* and *Sensuality.*

And being thus miserably mistaken in their Reckonings, they value themselves by the abundance they possess, not considering that their great Revenue, as well as their Health, Time, and Opportunities increase their Care, as *Talents* of which they must give a strict Accompt; and as they hoarded up, or sacrificed them to their vain Glory, or Pleasure in their Life-time; so when they die, (still reckoning all their own,) they usually dispose of what they have left, to others, who being equally Slaves to their own Passions, either follow the same foot steps of immoderate scraping together, or else prove as great Vassals to the like inordinate Desires, in scattering, as they (that went before) were in gathering, (for in both, *Mammon* is the commanding Power or Deity,) each seeking that Satisfaction from the finite Enjoyments of this World, (wherein the Shadow only of the Divine Excellency is scattered) which can be no where found below God himself, the Fountain and Original of all Perfection; who like the beloved Pole to its Needle, can alone give rest to man's boundless and immortal Appetite.

Thus have I known great Estates gotten and spent within the compass of My own Memory; as the one from a small beginning rolled together his Mole-hill of Wealth, so nothing remains of his prodigal Successor's, save only this infallible Truth, That both *laboured in vain for satisfaction in that which cannot satisfie.*

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It is easie to know these Truths; but only difficult for such to practise, who have not yet throughly learned that (seeming hard) Lesson of *Self-denial and* the *Cross*, the first terrible blow to Flesh and Blood, and Touch-stone of true Religion, which our Saviour makes an indispensable requisite to the very being of his Disciples, though it seems *a hard saying* to them that have not so learned Christ.

Our *Love to our selves* easily inclines us to believe, (at least, to wish in our Hearts,) That the Happiness and Glory of the World to come, might consist with a full Enjoyment of our Portion also in this Life, which renders all those Doctrines so pleasing and agreeable, that do allow Saints a greater Right than Sinners in the Riches, Dominion and Government of the World, though this be quite contrary to what our Saviour himself taught, when he declared the Love and Service of *God* and *Mammon* (or the World) to be inconsistent in one and the same *Worshipper*, as irreconcileable as *Heaven* and *Hell*; for that the one is in direct opposition to the other. Our *Love* to *God* aspires upwards, towards him as the *Centre* of our *Rest*, and the only *Happiness* our Souls do thirst after: Our *Love* of *Mammon* (or the World) is groveling downwards to the Earth, and always *centres* in *our selves*; but never quiet, insatiably *desiring*, though never *satisfied*. For our *Soul* is an *Eternal Principle*, and cannot feed on *fading Enjoyments*: *Goodness* it self is her proper *Food*, of which all the *World* is but a faint *Shadow*. The Love of *Mammon* craves *sensible Good*; but the *Love* of *God* begs rather *the Light of his Countenance*. Psal. 4, 6. 7.

This is the Reason why all our Comforts in these lower Enjoyments are never certain; but do ever ebb and flow according to the fading Nature of the Object wherein we seek our Happiness, (whether it be *Riches*, *Honours*, or *Pleasures*;) all which, like Weeds, that seem Flowers to Sense, yield nothing but Emptiness and Vanity to the Mind, and do always end in vexation of Spirit. Which is a plain Demonstration that 'tis impossible for the Soul of Man to find true rest or satisfaction in this outward World, till she return, (by inward retiring of the Mind) *home to God from whom she first fell*, as the living Fountain of *Good*. How pathetically does *David* bear witness to this Truth, by his own inward Experience in *Psal.* 63. *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my Soul thirsteth for thee, my Flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is, to see thy Power and thy* * *Glory, so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary: because thy loving kindness is better than Life; my lips shall praise thee:*

* By this *eternal Glory in the Sanctuary*, we are now to understand that *internal beauty of Holiness*, which by intellectual view, we behold from our Contemplation in the inward Temple of our Mind; reflecting on the purity of God's Worship in the Assembly of his Saints.

thee: Thus will I bless thee while I live, and will lift up my hands in thy Name: My Soul shall be satisfied, as with Marrow and Fatness; and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee on my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night-Watches; because thou hast been my help; therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoyce.

Now forasmuch as such an holy Frame of Spirit is purely wrought by God's Grace; so it is our Duty in an humble manner to pray for it; and God who is faithful in all, hath promised to bestow it on them that diligently and sincerely seek it.

And I wish every Member of private Congregations, who are so apt to be puft up with an over-weening Conceit of their own Ability, as to think themselves above all set Forms of Prayer, were so convinced of their own Ignorance and Weakness, as to make use of this one *Collect* in our *Church-Liturgy*, for their ease and help herein.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly Wills and Affections of sinful Men: Grant unto thy People, that they may love the thing which thou dost command, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold Changes of this World, our Hearts may surely there be fixed, where true Joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

To which I shall subjoin but this one short Prayer, as another Part of the same *Liturgy*; which here followeth:

Almighty God, unto whom all Hearts be open, and all Desires known, and from whom no Secrets are hid; cleanse the Thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, *and worthily magnifie thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord,* Amen.

And now I have mention'd the *Liturgy*, I humbly appeal to all charitable and well-disposed Followers of the Blessed Redeemer, (who have try'd and examined it,) whether this plain and brief Form may not suit with the capacity and disposition of the most learned and least knowing; the Pharisee and the Publican, the soundest Believer, and the most scrupulous and tender Conscience; so as they may all joyn together in their Publick Devotion.

And whether there be in any other way of Worship, a Standard more agreeable to the Frame and Faculties of Man's Mind, than in our Liturgy established among us, so as by frequent and solemn Assembling themselves together, they may thereby provoke, encourage, and dispose one another to Union of Heart, and Harmony

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in Divine Worship, as the highest Happiness attainable (in Common) among Christians in this World; though for a time the Case may be the same with them, as it was with me and many others, to have an aversion to it, from the Misrepresentation of others, or want of a right apprehension of some things contained in it. But to return:

How miserable a Creature then is the *Covetous Worldling*, who so little troubles himself with the things of Religion, or the World to come, That he feels no other *Hunger* or *Thirst*, but after *Mammon*, or this world; being so possest with the Love of it, that he hath no room left in his heart for Love of any thing besides? And whilst he labours under the *Tyranny* of an *insatiable Desire* of more, he feels no comfort in all that he doth enjoy, though he hugs his *Mammon* as his only God and Portion, the Object of all his Thoughts, Love, and Delight, till his Soul be ravish'd from him; leaving his *Body* and *Mammon* to perish together.

And this is the first sort of Crying Sins, arising from *Self-Love*, or *Moral Idolatry*, in such as seek Heaven and Happiness in *Mammon* here below, judging and censuring all others but themselves.

I shall now proceed to speak of the Second; which is, *Debauchery* and *Immorality*.

AND as for such as have given themselves up to *Sensuality* and *Debauchery*, so as not to wait upon the Posts of Wisdom's Doors, in a conscientious and sober Use of the Means; as, Reading, Hearing, Praying, Conversing with themselves alone, and with good Men, in order to be reformed; but are so far from desiring or endeavouring to be reclaimed, that they are rather ready to offer violence to sober Reproof, and to deride and scoff at all Advice and good Counsel; I say, such as these, who are too apt to name themselves Sons of the Church, ought not to be reckon'd among Professors, (though our Adversaries most uncharitably or designedly father too many of them upon us,) because they do not own God's Livery in any visible Acts of Piety and Devotion; but having desperately shut their Eyes, and hardned their Hearts, do by their wilful Rebellion declare themselves Enemies to God and all Religion: And that such as these have been both the Cause, and Instruments to bring God's Judgments upon us, none can doubt; though they all, as haters of God and Goodness, are ever apt to vent

their Fury and Malice (when God's Hand is upon them,) againſt the moſt righteous and innocent Perſons.

And I ſhall addreſs my ſelf to them, as they diſtinguiſh themſelves by their crying Abominations; and name but Three for all the reſt.

1. In that un-manning and brutiſh Sin of *Drunkenneſs*, the *Parent* and *Nurſe* of many other Sins, as it puts out the Lamp of *Reaſon*, Man's healthful Guide unto all *vertuous* Actions, and ſafe Pilot to ſhun *Vice*. This Sin diſpoſes Men to all that may be called wicked, to betray their *Prince*, their *Religion*, their *Countrey*, and all to ſerve their Luſts; for he that has abandon'd his Reaſon, and loſt all *Senſe* of *Honour* and *Shame*, is falſe to his own Soul, and can never be true to any thing elſe.

Nor is that Man's Crime leſs, whoſe Body and Brain can bear moſt. Nay the Scripture pronounces the greateſt *Woe* againſt the *Mighty Drinker*, as a Murderer of his Brethren, by provoking them beyond their Strength, to bear an equal part with him, in a moſt impious abuſe of God's Creatures. In which ſervile Drudgery of Sin and Satan, he is a kind of *Felo de ſe*; he *conſumes his Time and Patrimony, his Parts, his Body and Soul, and ſo falls at laſt a Sacrifice to the Sin that he loves above all theſe, nay, above God himſelf.*

2. The *Profane Swearer*, who ſo cheaply ſells his Soul to the Devil, for neither Pleaſure, Honour nor Profit, the three Shadows of Good, wherewith he baits his Hook to incline Men to all other Sins beſides, is ſurely the worſt ſort of Prodigal in the World.

What words can utter his prodigious Folly, and daring Impiety, who with bloody Oaths calls for Damnation without ceaſing, (when he is already under the Sentence,) as if he ſcorned the leaſt moment to prepare for his Execution?

Such a *deſperate Caitiff* had need go to *Tyburn* to learn Diſcipline of thoſe miſerable Criminals; who though they have been all their Life unmindful of their latter end, being now ſenſible their Time is limited by Man, (and may be ſooner determined by God,) would make any Terms of better Obedience, if they might have but a time of Trial.

Certainly were not Men grown paſt feeling by long practice, they might tremble to think, that the ſame God who in terrible Thunder publiſhed Man's Duty on *Mount Sinai* in Ten Precepts, made no difference between the *Thief*, the *Murtherer*, and the *Swearer*; How deſperate then is the *Common Swearer*, who can abſtain from *Robbing* and *Killing* for fear of being *hanged* by the Law of Man; yet dares blaſpheme the Living God, the Law-giver of Hea-

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Heaven and Earth, and ſtab his Redeemer with *bloody Oaths*, though he be already ſentenced (without Repentance) in Body and Soul unto *Hell-fire?*

3 The *Unclean Perſon*, eſpecially he that glories in his Shame; How wretchedly does he cheat himſelf in the *Object of his Love*, when he forſakes his *God*, the Fountain of his Being, and the moſt *amiable Satisfying Good*, in exchange for a ſordid and inſatiable *Luſt*, transforming himſelf into a lalcivious Goat, to hug and careſs the poiſoned Carcaſs of his filthy Hag in loathſome Embraces, wallowing in the polluted Mire of impure and unchaſte Thoughts, till his Mind become the Den of Satan, and a Cage of unclean Birds.

Well might *Solomon* denominate the *Saint* and *Sinner*, by the Character of a *Wiſe Man* and of a *Fool*, without any other Note of Diſtinction. How can he be accounted wiſe, that refuſes Counſel, and hates Knowledge? How can you be Chriſtians indeed, when by your Lives and Language your proclaim you'ſelves your Redeemer's Enemies? You muſt meaſure your *Love* to God by the Senſe you have of Evil. Never pretend to be Honourers of God, when you can be unconcerned at the higheſt Diſhonour done unto his Name; make a Mock of *Sin*, and divert your ſelf with the filthy Converſation of the Wicked.

To what a deſperate Pitch are ye now grown, who can thus ſin without Recoil? you have now conquered a tender Mind, and can ridicule what's ſacred, and ſcoff at all that is ſerious; for * no Man was ever ſo extreamly wicked of a ſudden. Wonder O Heavens, and be aſtoniſhed O Earth! that a Chriſtian Age and Nation ſhould produce ſuch daring Rebels to an *Holy God*, to pull down Vengeance on us all.

* Nemo repentè fuit turpiſſimus. *Juv.*

Do but call in your Mind, and hear God's *Voice* by his Prophet, thus ſpeaking. *If I be a Father, where is mine Honour? If I be a Maſter, where is my Fear?* Mal. 1. 6. Let every Man examine, and judge himſelf, how little ſhare God can have in his *Love*, when he ſeldom thinks of him, or never ſeeks after him; but when thoſe his Idols (or filthy Luſts, wherein he moſt delights,) do fail him: For according as Mens Comforts ebb and flow from theſe lower Enjoyments ſo uſually God hears from them in their danger, Want, and Miſery. And let any Man in his Wits ask himſelf the Queſtion, Whether he could bear with ſuch Ingratitude and baſe Uſage from his Fellow-Creature?

And to you, *Scarlet Sinners*, I ſpeak, and dare not be ſilent; to you, the *ſhame of our Religion and Government*; to you, the *Reproach* of our *Church and Nation*, and *Grief* of all *good Men*. How dare you call your ſelves *Chriſtians*, when you hate to be reformed?

You

You are the Peſt of the Kingdom wherein you live, infecting our Youth, the Seed of Poſterity. And as theſe crying Sins, by the Law of God do render you moſt unworthy to ſhare in our *Civil Government*; ſo you, above all men, are moſt unfit to be intruſted with any *Military Employment*; for we have found by woeful experience, that,

Drunkards, Swearers, and Whoremongers, can never be good Soldiers, as being uncapable of true Courage and good Conduct; and therefore we may ſafely conclude,

Such as you are the worſt of Men, an horrid Scandal and Nuſance, but no way ſerviceable to your King or Countrey. The worſt of Soldiers in time of Danger, though Fool-hardy in your Mirth and Jollity, thus highly to provoke your Maker. In time of Peace, you ſtifle your Conſcience, you ſilence it with your Curſes and Oaths, as Drums and Trumpets drown the Cries in a Battel, but in the Face of an Enemy, when you ſhould defend your Countrey, you tremble at Judgment to come, ſhunning the danger, (as Malefactors do Execution, in hope of a Reprieve,) that you may have Time to repent, though the Kingdom periſh.

'Tis only the vertuous Man and the ſober, that can be Men of Conduct and Reſolution, whoſe inward Teſtimony animates the ir Courage, by aſſuring them of their Reward; That if they live, they gain immortal Honour; if they die, their Life is a Sacrifice in defence of their Religion and Country.

All other Courage is either without rational Conduct, ariſing from the Ferment of Blood and Spirit, wherein Game-Cocks and Maſtiffs out-do the greateſt Heroes; or elſe it is Fool-hardy Valour, ariſing perhaps from Brandy, or ſuch intoxicating Liquors, which operate into Frenzy, evaporate into frothy Folly, and expire in Drowzineſs and Stupidity.

And how unfit ſuch a Creature is for Conduct, or to look Death in the Face, when inward guilt, and reflexion on paſt Folly, ſtrikes him with horror and apprehenſion of a future Judgment, none know better than his own Conſcience; which when it ſhould animate his Courage, ſtrikes him with Terror, and makes him a fearful Coward.

Conſider now all you that thus force your ſelves againſt God's inward Teaching, it is no more than what the Heathen allowed to be *innate in every man's Breaſt; and what your own Conſcience, if you give it leave to ſpeak, will witneſs to be true; nay, you will and muſt hear it on a *dying Bed*, or at a *ſhameful End*, (the juſt Reward of ſuch impious Folly.) It is continued Diſobedience to this

* Video meliora, proboq; Deteriora ſequor.

this inward Teaching (after long ſtriving with God's Spirit) breeds Deſpair, which often ends with the *Knife*, and *Halter*, as a terrible warning to all that ſurvive.

Dread therefore the Thoughts of Judgment to come, where the Worm that never dies, in eternal Anguiſh, ſhall, like a Vulture, gnaw upon your wounded Spirit, by reflexion on your paſt Follies and long abuſe of God's Patience, waiting to bring you to Repentance.

Be wiſe yet before it be too late; God ſtill waits to be gracious, with a *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* I have ſurvived forty thouſand that are all periſhed in theſe Quick-ſands, and am only ſpared for your ſake, to hang out my Experience for your Light, to warn you all from deſperately adventuring farther in the ſame wicked Courſe. Be not deceived, abuſed Mercy will turn to Fury; never pretend to be *Lovers of your Country*, *Church-men*, or *Loyal Subjects*, till you reſolve to be *Chriſtians* and *good Men*.

For it is moſt certain; Rebels to God, and their own Conſcience, *can never be* good Subjects or true Friends: *And it is as certain our holy Religion* (*the* beſt ſupport of Monarchy, and the ſureſt Bulwork againſt Popery) *is* (*with the Goſpel it ſelf*) *equally incapable of ſuffering, but from the* vicious Lives and Immoralities of ſuch wicked Members, *who thereby expoſe themſelves as the vileſt Criminals on Earth, and Objects of God's eternal Diſpleaſure.* I ſhall now briefly ſpeak

Of the Doctrine and Diſcipline of our *National Church*: the chief Cauſe and Continuance of *Separation* from it, ariſes from Scandal of ſome of our *Clergy*, and the Immorality of ſome of *our Members*; which is the Caſe of the *Goſpel it ſelf*. The Removal of this Offence, is the proper *Medium* for *Uniformity*, as the only Means to unite us all againſt our *Common Enemy*.

OF this Matter, I humbly beg leave to ſpeak plainly the Sentiments of my own Mind, without Flattery, or Railing, or giving juſt Offence to any.

Our *Religion eſtabliſhed*, commands and approves of all that is excellent and praiſe-worthy; it forbids and condemns all that is evil; exciting moſt powerfully to a holy exemplary Life.

It eſteems all external Mode, Form, and Geſture, to be but the Cruſt and Shell of Divine Worſhip; it lays no more ſtreſs on any Rite or Ceremony, than only Decency and Order require. Neither

ther could I ever find those Members of our Communion, who might truly deserve the Name of Pillars of our Church, so fond of any thing that was indifferent, but they could most willingly part with it, to purchase Union with their Dissenting Brethren; if desired in such a manner, and to be done in such a way, as may preserve Unity and Peace in the Church.

Our Doctrine and Discipline manifestly disclaims all Superstition and Idolatry, as most abominable; and (to the shame of such ill Members) is defective in nothing but *good Living*, which (*none can deny*) is the Case of the Gospel it self. Therefore the greater Woe is pronounced against them, that thus scandalize it, by giving Offence to others, or expose it with prejudice to any.

We are blessed with a great number of Pious, Learned, and Reverend Fathers and Pastors: But, *hinc illæ Lachryma*, we have had too many others, (and I wish it were more laid to heart,) that have caused our Religion to be evil spoken of. And we know who said it; *Woe be to them by whom such Offences come.*

I pray God grant all that take upon themselves that high and holy Calling, *may so qualifie themselves for it, and so regulate their Lives according to the* Examples of those I first mentioned, *that by* a pious, humble, *and* blameless conversation, (*the most* powerful living Preaching,) *they may put to silence those Adversaries, who are too apt to take* causless Offence, and maae a great Matter of it, *where little is given*; *that they may thereby remove that* Prejudice, *which the* Miscarriages *of some of their Brethren have created in the Minds of too many towards our* Discipline *and* Worship; giving them occasion *not only to* separate *from us, but even to reproach our* Religion, *as countenancing such* Enormities. This would wonderfully contribute towards so desirable a Blessing, as *Uniformity* and *Harmony in Divine Worship.*

Of the great Evil in bad Examples of *Magistrates*, *Parents*, and *Masters of Families*; and from their neglect in their Duty.

AND in order to so great and publick a Blessing, as *Harmony in Divine Worship*, (for the Foundation must be laid in a Reformation of Manners,) it highly concerns you *Magistrates* and *Rulers*, as God's Vicegerents, to consider your Duty; both high and low, in every Quality and Degree; and even you *Parents* and *Masters*, as well as Publick Officers; for you are every one in his *peculiar Province*, as a *God* here below; set up and appointed in his stead, to punish and discountenance evil doers, and to defend and encourage them that doe well.

And

And where by evil doing, you give *bad Examples*, it aggravates your Crime ten fold; and you shall assuredly answer for all the *Evil* which thereby you give occasion, or encourage others to commit.

And you may be also assured of this, that where you are remiss, or negligent, to exert your Power and Authority, *to hinder Vice and Wickedness in others, it is equally the same, and you shall be accordingly judged, as if you had commanded or countenanced it.* Qui non vetat peccare, cum potest, jubet.

It is you must *reform* the Age we live in, and assist the *Government* we live under: The *Trust* in you reposed, is a great, a *sacred Talent*, for which you must account, as being under a strict *Obligation* to *God* and *Man*, to be just and faithful therein.

It is from a Neglect in you, that our *good Laws* are trampled under foot, and rendred useless, at a time when there is more need than ever of their due Execution.

That *Publick Houses*, at first designed for *Conveniency*, in *Moderation* on *lawful Occasions*, are now erected, multiplied, (and as it were *consecrated*) to be *Shops* and *Nurseries* of *Prodigality* and *Intemperance*, and *Seminaries* of *Debauchery* in all *Disorder* and *Impiety*.

That our Streets do swarm with the worst of Vermin, *Shop-Lifts*, and *Pick-pockets*, lewd *Ballad-Singers*, *Rioting* and *Ribaldry*; and (which is now become our common Nusance,) with *Beggars* in the *Day-time*, and the *Night* with the *Spawn* of the Bottomless Pit, those Drabbs called *Night-walkers*, *Panders*, *Pimps*, and *Common Drunkards*, with Innumerable Thieves, as the Product of all, in aiding, receiving, abetting, or conniving. All this arises, encreases, and continues through your *Neglect*.

It is also from your *Neglect* that such numberless Troops of Infernal Agents, *Bullies*, *Cheats*, and *Gamesters*, the Locusts of our Age, are peaceably suffered openly to frequent all Publick Places, in the Disguise of Gentlemen, to have free and undisturbed Opportunities, as *Inhabitants* and *Residents* amongst us; and by all their subtle Arts and Insinuations, do corrupt and debauch our Youth, as well in *Schools* as *Families*, especially the *Universities* and *Seminaries* of the *Law*; as also *Servants* (Male and Female) *Apprentices* and *Cashiers*, to dispose and discipline them by all the Lures and Baits of Pride, Pleasure, Gaming, Drunkenness and Wantonness, to defraud, filch, purloin, and at length desperately to betray their Trust, by downright Robbery, picking of Locks, false Keys, and counterfeit Bills, and all the ways wherein the Devil instructs those Agents, to bring them to ruine.

And as by *Luxury*, *Prodigality*, and *Intemperance*, men thus consume their Estates, lose their Credit, and become desperate in their

Fortune, they from thence (as naturally as Effects hold of Cauſes) turn *Gameſters*, *Cheats*, *High-way-men*, *Houſe breakers*, *Horſe-ſtealers*, and ſuch like *Caterpillers*, to devour and deſtroy; aſſociating themſelves into Cabals and Parties in their ſeveral Diviſions, as (it were) the *Banditi* of the Kingdom.

Nay, we ſo far exceed other Nations in *bare-fac'd* and *daring Wickedneſs*; that whereas they allow only of ſecret *Stews* and *Brothel-Houſes*, we have innumerable open Shops, (as Warehouſes of Hell,) where impudent Strumpets expoſe themſelves as the Devil's Nets, to catch their weak and ſilly Prey, having their Factors abroad (thoſe *Bullies* and *Hectors*) in diſguiſe of Gentlemen, to inveigle young and old to thoſe Chambers of Death.

If the Laws made by our prudent Anceſtors againſt theſe Enemies of Mankind, That all Perſons, Lodgers, and Inmates, that live high, fare well, wear a garb of Perſons of Quality, and are ſuſpected to ſpend above their Income, as having no certain viſible Eſtate, or other lawful ways to ſupport their Expences, ſhall give an account to Magiſtrates, what they are, from whence they come, and how they live, and from time to time find Sureties for their good Behaviour; how many of theſe Evils might be removed and prevented?

If the Laws made in all thoſe Caſes, as alſo againſt the Profanation of the Lord's Day (the Spring and Source of all theſe Evils) were duly put in execution, this would be the moſt effectual means to cauſe an univerſal Reformation of Manners, and ſecure us at home and abroad againſt our ſecret and foreign Enemies.

But this Reformation muſt begin from your own Pattern and Example.

Therefore eſpecially remember, you are intruſted, as God's Repreſentatives; and the beſt way is for every Man to begin at home with himſelf, to reform that which will inevitably ruine *all*, if continued a little longer, and leave the ſucceeding Generations a Wilderneſs of ſalvage Beaſts, whoſe Blood will lie at your doors; for from hence ſpring all the Evils I have already ſpoken of.

That Maſters and Heads of Families, when they ſhould be at home ſober Patterns and Examples to Children and Servants, with their Family, offering up their Morning and Evening-Sacrifice to the God of their Being; even for them to be then conſuming their Time, as well as Subſtance, abroad in Coffee-Houſes, and other publick Houſes, leaving their Children and Servants obnoxious to all the ſnares may be laid for them by the Devil and his Agents. This is a

Matter

Matter deſerves the conſideratiou of all, eſpecially ſuch as are under ſo great Obligations to reform it,

The putting of a ſtop to theſe growing Evils, is the only Means to reſtore a ſober and induſtrious Education of Youth, under ſober Tutors, Maſters, and Inſtructors, by ſevere Diſcipline, the only Foundation whereon to raiſe the ancient Glory of the *Britiſh Iſle*, in a ſtock of ſuch Natives of our own, as by prudent ſteerage of the Helm at home, and Martial Conduct abroad, may again give Law to all the World.

And to deal plainly, if you impartially examine your ſelves, you will find all this Neglect proceeds from the Poiſon of *Self-Love*, as being blind towards your ſelves, and afraid to look home, and too forward to cenſure others.

And that makes you partial, and ſway'd with Intereſt or Affection; like old *Ely*, too gentle in reproving your Relations, or afraid of your Superiors; unwilling to diſoblige your Friends, and too apt to gratifie your Neighbors, Cuſtomers, or your Tenants; and, it may be, loth to puniſh in another, what you are guilty of your ſelf. Thus it will be when our Love to God, the Spring of all our Happineſs, is turned on our ſelves, the Fountain of all Evil: Then Governors, appointed by God to be his Deputies for the good of their Inferiors, turn Renegadoes, and act in the Devil's Work, to the inevitable Ruine of Poſterity, whoſe Puniſhment hereafter will be anſwerable to their Crime, if they eſcape (as they ſeldom do) their Portion of Shame and Miſery here.

But that which ſhould be our greateſt grief (though few lay it to Heart) is the Diſhonour done to God, and the ſcandal done to our Religion, from ſuch groſs Neglect, and evil Practices in the Profeſſors of it.

From hence, it is manifeſt, our Adverſaries on all ſides take occaſion by their venemous Tongues, and the virulent Pens of mercenary Knaves, and Scriblers, in printed Libels and railing Pamphlets, maliciouſly and falſely to charge the pureſt, and beſt eſtabliſhed Religion in the whole World, with ſuch Immoralities and execrable Treaſons, as have been hatched in ſecret, by the moſt flagitious Villains and Traytors.

It argues little Charity for our Religion, or Kindneſs for us, at this time a-day, in ſo publick a manner to blemiſh the ſettled Doctrine, and Diſcipline of our National Church, with ſuch ſide-wind Reflexions, as if it countenanced, or allowed the Words or Actions of ſome deſigning Knaves, (who can be of any Perſuaſion,) and ſome profligate Villains, (the proper Tools of ſuch Knaves,) who have given themſelves the Name of Church of England-*Men, but are indeed of no Religion at all, and have been really concerned in the late damnable Plot, or do diſpute whether*

there be any such Plot or no, as if our Doctrine or Discipline instructed them therein.

Christian Charity, without Reflexion, would rather have concluded; (as our Religion teacheth;) That sincere Christians will ever be Loyal Subjects, Honest Men, and Good Neighbors. But Rogues will be Rogues in all Climates; and designing Knaves and Timeservers, will be Hypocrites and Traytors in all Persuasions.

What Mercy can we expect at the Hands of these Men, (were they but arm'd with Power,) who thus publickly arraign and explode, not only our National Church in general, but also such Persons, whose Piety and Meekness in the whole Tenour of their Lives, (especially under their late Trial,) *might have obliged their worst Enemies, in Silence, to bewail them in their present Condition, and leave them to stand and fall to their own Maker; at least, to a more charitable Opinion of them, than thus rashly to charge them,* as Betrayers of our Laws, Liberties, and Religion; nay, of the whole Kingdom, by inviting the most barbarous, tyrannical Disturber of *Christendom* to accept it.

This is far from Love *of* Truth, Christian Zeal, *or* Loyalty *for their* Majesties now in the Throne: *But we may (with more Charity) conclude it to be done at this juncture, on purpose to* expose our Religion, and all its Adherents, *so as thereby to excite, and enrage the credulous and ungovernable Multitude (who are easily imposed upon) against them,* as Authors of all the Miseries and Calamities we now groan under, *as a ready way to set us all in a Flame, even now that we stand in most need of Union.*

When God knows, they that are thus censorious, *and* rash *in* judging, *may have had as great a share (as any) in the procuring Cause. I speak my own Mind plainly, as apprehending it my Duty; for should I be unconcerned, when I hear my innocent Mother publickly slandered and exploded, I should declare my self worse than an Infidel.*

But all this still proceeds from the same Original Fountain, *and* Poison *of* Self Love.

This would be no Riddle, if Men would first look home, *and* judge themselves; *for Men of all* Persuasions *are so ready to blame others, before they do this, that they are too apt wholly to excuse themselves, with the* Pharisee; I thank thee, O Father, I am not as this *Publican.*

But the right way of judging, *is (as I have said before) to trace our Misery to its Cause, and from thence look up to him that appoints the Instruments of our Punishments, and can remove or change them at his pleasure.*

Now

Now let us consider the Third and last, but the most *sublime & subtil sort of* Moral Idolatry; *or*, The great Danger and Evil of *Ambition* and *Worldly Design* under the Vizor of Zeal for *Reformation*; and of *Liberty of Conscience*, and the great Abuse of it.

'Tis true, as God Almighty hath various Ways and Methods to reform and discipline his Children, according to their various Tempers and Dispositions; so the Devil, by his Janizaries, Designing Hypocrites, *and* Time-servers, *who can readily take any Impression in Religion, be of two or three persuasions at once, to promote their own* Interest, *puts himself into various shapes, and baits his Hook with various Objects, suited to mens different Inclinations, that he may catch both* Pharisee *and* Publican; *as well the* spiritually proud, *as the* Debauchee, *that no Fish may escape his Net, and (if it were possible) the Elect too should be cheated by him.*

Thus he baits the Luxurious *with* Pleasure, *the* Avaritious *with* Riches, *and the* Ambitious *with* Pride, Dominion, *and* worldly Design.

When he designs to subvert a Kingdom, or overthrow a Government, he doth not appear immediately in Arms *and* open Hostility; *but first under a* Disguise *of* Zeal *for* Reformation, *which he generally prosecutes, by removing all* Foundation *laid in the* first Principles *of* Religion; *and then proceeds to create various* Opinions *in the Minds of honest and well-meaning Persons, of easie and credulous Dispositions; continually raising* Niceties *and* Scruples, (*before any* Foundation *be laid in* fundamental *Knowledge of the first Principles of our* Religion, *contained in the* Lord's Prayer, *the* Ten Commands, *and the* Creed,) *and those* Niceties *and* Scruples *are more and more irritated by* subtil *and* designing Teachers, *under a* Disguise *of* Liberty *of* Conscience.

God forbid Liberty *of* Conscience (*if regulated by the Standard of the* Scriptures) *as it is the Birthright of every Christian, should be denied to any that in sincerity desire it, to live peaceably under the* Government in all Godliness and Honesty; *because many persons of honest and well-meaning Principles, may, from their* Education in Foreign Parts, *or in Families of* different Persuasions, *either misapprehend, or not rightly understand the Truth of our Doctrine and Discipline established among us.*

And many others, in the simplicity of their Hearts, when they see the vicious Lives *and* Actions *of some of our Members, or the* Scandal *of some of our* Clergy, *in things that are open and manifest, may be*

be ſo impoſed upon, by Jeſuitical Whiſpers *on the one hand, and* private inſinuating Teachers, *on the other hand, as to imagine that our Religion eſtabliſhed, muſt either countenance or allow of ſuch Evils in the Profeſſors of it. Which (as I have already ſaid) is the Caſe of the Goſpel it ſelf.*

Now foraſmuch as our Government is founded in the Law of God and Nature, and our Religion eſtabliſhed, is ſettled and framed from no other Standard or Original but God's revealed Will in the Scriptures, and ſo both may be a juſt Standard for all other Governments. *It muſt therefore be a Strain of great Arrogance and Preſumption in any State-Mountebank to propoſe any Foreign Preſident for alteration of either.*

And to ſilence all Complaints but theirs, whom nothing leſs than All will ſatisfie, As our Religion *and* Government *ſo eſtabliſhed, do allow a peaceable and innocent* Liberty of Conſcience, *the Grand Charter of Chriſtianity it ſelf; (which we have found by experience, no other differing Perſuaſion but ours, would ever allow any longer than they wanted power to reſtrain it;) ſo none can deny it to be both prudent and juſt in the* Government, (*from the Law of* Self-preſervation,) *to take care of, and ſecure it ſelf againſt all abuſe of ſo great a Bleſſing, by ſuch, who have* pure Religion *only in their* Mouths, *but the rankeſt Poiſon of* Ambition *and* Worldly Deſign *in their* Hearts; *making no Scruple (as Opportunity offers) to devour Widows Eſtates, as well as the Houſes and Patrimony of them and all others, to make way for their own* Ambitious Deſigns; *For we find it moſt certainly true, by woeful experience, that* it is impoſſible to ſecure any Government in the World on a laſting Foundation, but by annexing it with the Religion eſtabliſhed, ſo as to make them inſeparable, according to the Policy of *New-England*; (*where* Liberty of Conſcience *firſt planted their* Law-makers.) They that do not firſt approve of, and embrace our Religion eſtabliſhed, ought to have no ſhare in our Government.

But ſuch as would come into the Government *on other Terms, have* Liberty of Conſcience *only in their* Mouths, *but* Ambition *and* worldly Deſign *in their* Hearts; *which they carry on by multiplying Sects under ſeveral Leaders, (each ambitious to be Head of his own Party) who, by their influence on credulous and well-meaning Perſons, encloſe them, as in ſo many* Peculiars, *each Paſtor to encline and lead his own Flock; the only Method to divide, and conſequently to weaken both the Government and Religion eſtabliſhed; That whenever their Intereſt is in danger, they may eaſily (as hath been practiſed in like caſes) by the ſame Art, diſpoſe all to unite (for the ſame end) againſt the Government they live under.*

And thus one and the ſame common (though inviſible) Enemy of Mankind, putting himſelf into various ſhapes, and baiting his Hook with proper Objects, ſuited to mens various Inclinations and Diſpoſitions, (which

all

all centre in Self-love,) can first divide and weaken, and again unite to destroy the best Religion and Government in the world; though the designing Party are ever lurch'd in what they aim at, which is Dominion and Rule.

For no sooner is any Party gotten uppermost, but the same Principle of Ambition and worldly Design animates the rest (that are under) to supplant that, in order to advance themselves into the Government; so that their whole Babel of Designiog and Contriving, ever ends in Anarchy and Confusion; which hath caused many of their Chief Builders (convinced by their own woesul experience) at last to acknowledge their Error, and to declare, That to seek a Kingdom in this world by carnal Means and Weapons, is no true Badge of the Blessed Redeemer's Followers.

What clearer Demonstration can we have that there is always such a Designing Party at the Bottom, under the most specious Vizor of Zeal for Reformation, and Liberty of Conscience, than to see those who pretend to the greatest Purity and Sanctity (though of several Persuasions) all to unite, and dilgently apply themselves to such Patrons and Leaders, whose Interest and Influence may best promote their Design, though they all know them to be of no Religion at all; nay, such as are guilty of the greatest * Immoralities; who can thunder out bloody Oaths without reluctancy, and make use of their Power and Interest to oppress others, and engross the Widow and Orphans Estates. Such Men as these, are proper Objects of all the Courtship and Address of those consecrated Politicians; for they well know they are adapted for their Turn, who readily prostituting their Conscience to their Interest, can be most serviceable to their ambitious Designs, And as they are Favorites in the highest station, so they are capable of the greatest Acts of Oppression and Injustice therein, (by alienating the Hearts of Subjects,) they may contribute more to dethrone a Monarch, or subvert a Government, than Ten Thousand Armed Men; especially as these designing Hypocrites manage it to their own advantage; who, though they always carry the flattery of a Loyal All-hail in their Mouths; yet by secret Trumpets in every corner they arraign the Prince himself, as Author of all Acts of Injustice and Oppression, done by such his Ministers, to render Monarchy uneasie to the People; and at the same time, with no less industry, both in publick and private, expose the most Faithful and Loyal Counsellors and Magistrates, who are most true to the Church and Government, and the very Pillars and Security of the Throne, as Betrayers of their Country, their Laws and Liberty; rendring them odious to the Prince and People, that they may remove them, in order to get Champions and Agents of their own Faction, into all Places and Offices of Trust and Power in the Government,

* Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo.

This

This discovers plainly that the Patrons and Clients are both governed by one and the same Principle of Self-Love, *which ebbs and flows with their own Interest, the vital part of their Religion, and so disposes them to divide or unite against that which opposes their Designs, and at length to quarrel among themselves about (what they all aim at)* Dominion *and* Rule.

The Result of all which may be this; to put us upon a

Modest Enquiry,

WHat Endeavors have been made by all the *Separate Congregations* in general, towards *Universal Reformation* of *Manners*, and *Allaying* our *Heats*, to *heal* our *Divisions*, in order to Union among our selves; the only means, under Heaven, to secure us in these perilous times against our *Foreign Enemy*.

And wherein *Christian Charity* and *Purity of Life* (farther than in cheap and easie fruit of the Lips) hath appeared in *Dissenters*, or those that *separate* from our *National Communion*, and pretend to *Extraordinary Call*, and *Conversion*, so as to distinguish them by any visible *Change* in their Lives and Conversation, from those of our *Communion*, who live according to the *Doctrine* and *Discipline* of our Church, or from what they themselves have ever before been in their lifetime.

And also what visible Effects the late *Indulgence* granted to *Dissenters* hath wrought for the better, in procuring more *meek*, *humble*, and *peaceable* Spirits, or abating *Pride*, *Murmuring*, or *Discontent*; railing against, and censuring of others, (even among their own Party,) in order to heal our Breaches, and compose our Differences.

Nay we may Modestly Enquire, whether the scope and tendency of all endeavours in the *Leading Party* among them, hath not been more, after *Dominion* and *Rule* here below, than to advance the *Kingdom of Christ* in the Hearts of Men? And in order to that, whether they have not, with the greatest Subtilty and Partiality improved their *Factories* and *Agency* by Humane Policy, to direct, order, or influence the choice of Magistrates and Officers in every Colony among us, from whence the greatest Heats and Disturbances have arisen, let the visible Effects speak for themselves?

And

And when we have ſo done, we may (from the Hiſtory of the laſt Age) reflect upon that *happy Union*, which continued among Proteſtants, in this Kingdom, in the open practice of *Piety*, *Sobriety* and *Righteouſneſs*, from the firſt time of the *Reformation*; but eſpecially during the forty four years of Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reign, when all (as one ſoul) joyfully and conſtantly aſſembled together at the ſet times appointed by the Church, to celebrate *Divine Service*, and hear the *Scriptures* daily read, as the only Means to keep up a *venerable Awe and Senſe* of the *Holy Majeſty* of God in the World, and in the mind of every individual perſon, and to maintain and increaſe *Chriſtian Charity* and *Brotherly Kindneſs*, (the alone *Medium* of *Union* in a Kingdom,) as being all fully perſuaded in their own Mind, it was a Service moſt acceptable to God, without any other Diſcipline, or way of Worſhip than what had been ſo ſetled among us by thoſe Pious and Learned *Martyrs* (the Founders of it,) who carried their own Faggots, (*not loving their Lives unto Death*,) to bear their Teſtimony for it.

By which means that happy Queen ſo long reigned in Peace, (by Love,) in the hearts of all her Subjects, and a *Terror* to all her Enemies, whereby our *National Church* became the Envy of *Rome*, and the only Sanctuary for all *Diſtreſſed Proteſtants* abroad.

All this plainly demonſtrates, that pure and undefiled Religion, *founded in* Piety, Sobriety *and* Righteouſneſs, *may be eaſily known of all, as it conſiſts in* Humility, Self-denial, *and* ſincere practice *of what we know*, (*all epitomiz'd in* good living,) *and not in* profound Knowledge, needleſs Diſputes, long Prayers, or fruitleſs Diſcourſes.

If theſe things were laid to heart, ſo as to be well weigh'd and conſidered by all *ſincere* and *well meaning Chriſtians*, who now ſeparate from our publick Communion, into private Congregations, that from thence they might be awakened, to examine, and (with me) ſeriouſly enquire into the Truth of things, they would ſoon find how miſerably they have been impoſed upon, and drawn into prejudice, and an ill apprehenſion of the *pureſt* and *beſt eſtabliſhed Religion* on the Earth, by ſuch deſigning Leaders as can be contented to ſacrifice the Peace and Safety of the whole Kingdom, to promote the Intereſt of a Party, in order to gratifie their own *Ambition* and *Worldly Deſign*, though under a Diſguiſe of *Liberty of Conſcience*; when in truth, by Separation from us, they do but exchange one *Shell* of *Religion* for another; for ſo I reckon, (and ſo our Church doth eſteem) the moſt refined Diſcipline, or outward way of Worſhip to be; and lays no more ſtreſs in it than Decency and

Order requires: Therefore it is no wonder that the most ignorant and short-sighted, and such as look no further into Religion, than the *outward appearance*; but are never capable of discerning the *Vital Substance*, should from the Scandal of some wicked Members, (from which the *Gospel* it self was not wholly exempt,) be so apt to despise our established Discipline, and yet at the same time idolize another Form or Way of Worship; as if God were more pleased with one *Shadow* than another

Whereas we esteem our outward Discipline no otherwise, than as outward Means, composed and adapted by the most Pious and Learned Men, from the Sacred Fountain of the Scriptures, suited to every Capacity through a whole Kingdom, the least knowing as well as the most learned; that all may join therein together. In which the *pious* and *well-disposed* Christian may worship God in the *Beauty of Holiness*, and the *Youth* and *Ignorant*, as with a leading step, may be train'd up, from the first Principles of Religion to the greatest perfection; and whereby also the *profane* and *loose*, are by a venerable Authority influenced and reclaimed, at least kept within some Bounds from *scoffing* at *Religion*; which is daily occasioned by the Separation of such who are still subject (with their Neighbours) to the same infirmities, attending humane frailty, as well as to *Pride*, *Ambition*, *Self Love*, (in the inordinate Love of the World,) *railing* at, and *censuring* of others; and yet puft up with a false conceit of their Way, do herd and distinguish themselves under their several *Leaders*, into so many and various *Ways*, *Opinions*, and *Persuasions*; (I wish it were not so near a Resemblance of the several Orders in the Church of *Rome*,) and all under conduct of their peculiar Guides.

From whence it comes to pass, that vain and loose Persons, beginning first with light thoughts of Religion, and by degrees declining the publick Prayers of the Church, and private Family-Duties, and from thence giving scope to boundless Lusts, at last cast off all Religion, and become downright *Debauchees*, and *Practical Atheists*.

This may satisfie any but such as are in love with a false Persuasion, and beforehand resolved to know no better, that the Offence is taken, and not justly given, by those that thus separate from our National Communion; especially when they may be all so clearly convinced, that the * original Cause of Separation from our Communion, did not arise from any thing either in our Doctrine, or the Discipline of our Church; but from what was acted by Temporal Rulers, (as they were steer'd by *Jesuits* and *Popish Interests*,) in Ecclesiastical Courts, procuring a Toleration of *Sports* on the *Lord's Day*; and Indulgence to be granted in other Matters, which

* There will be speedily Published the Second Part to this, for a full satisfaction in this Matter.

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our holy and pure Religion expresly condemns and abhors; which could not but be very offensive to many honest and well-meaning Persons; especially when so industriously improved by subtil *Jesuites*, and whispering *Sectaries*, (the secret Enemies of our Church,) who insinuated into the Minds of the easie and credulous, that our Religion did countenance such Evils; and thereby drew them into *Separate Congregations*; whereby they had opportunity to introduce so many *strange Doctrines*, and Variety of *Persuasions*, the *Seed* and *Cause* of all our *Heats*, *Divisions*, and *Animosities*, on the one hand, and of *Practical Atheism*, *Debauchery*, and *Immorality*, on the other: Both which, (as gross *Hypocrisie*, and *bare fac'd Impiety*,) do equally expose us to the Divine Vengeance, and lay us open to our Foreign Enemies: For it is most plain, the *Enthusiastick*, as well as the *Debauchee*, when thwarted in their Designs, have an equal Tendency to *Rebellion* and *Treason*.

I say, were sincere, (though miss-persuaded,) well-meaning persons, but once fully sensible of these great Truths, and of the unavoidable necessity of their returning into our *Communion*, as the only Means left to unite and save us, by restoring *True Piety* and *Christian Charity*, in *Sobriety* and *Righteousness* among us, it is impossible they should sleep quietly one Night before they return'd into this *Bosom* of Safety. For (God knows) I fear there is no other *Cure* left for our universal Distemper; and it is high time to begin so happy a Work.

Wherein their *Leaders*, if they have (as they all pretend to have) the Spirit of *Primitive Christianity*, may, (as faithful in God's Vineyard) outstrip all our *idle Labourers* in painful and powerful Preaching, and especially by their exemplary and holy living, so influence their Doctrine on the Mind, as to reclaim many profane persons, who now take occasion from their Separation, into so many Forms and Shadows of Religion, to inveigh and rail against them all.

And the *Lay-Members*, if they return into our Communion, and live up to what our holy Religion, (which is defective in nothing but *good living*, (doth most plainly and powerfully teach, may boldly reprove, (by our *Church Authority*,) and put to silence many open Transgressors, and *evil Doers*, who now take occasion from so many Fashions of Religion among us, to deride and scoff at all Religion in general; and also (to their great comfort) may thereby shame a scandalous Clergy-man into a Reformation of his Life, by saying (with the Spirit of Meekness) in the Language of the Holy Prophet, *I have more understanding than all my Teachers; for thy Testimonies are my Meditation.* Psal. 119.

And this (I bear witness) is countenanced by all our Reverend and Pious *Fathers* and *Pastors*, who would have *all to come to the knowledge and practice of the Truth*; and who (it is most manifest) are willing and ready to comply with any thing that may tend to heal our Breaches, and to purchase *Union* with their *Dissenting Brethren*, if desired in *such a way*, and to be done in *such a manner* as may preserve *Peace* and *Unity* in the Church.

Which we can never reasonably hope should be done without some *orderly Application* of such as must own themselves *inferiour* to those whom the Government (under which they live) have made their *Superiours*; which nothing can hinder or obstruct but *Pride*, *Obstinacy*, or *Worldly Design*; all which are directly contrary to the *meek*, *yielding*, and *Self-denying* Temper of *Primitive Christianity*.

And here I may with an humble Confidence enforce this Argument from the *greatest Example*, and the most *excellent Pattern*; even that of His *Sacred Majesty*, now in the *Throne*, the *Head* of *our Government*, and *Chief* of *our Communion*; whose incomparable *Perfections* (whether we consider Him as a *Man*, or as a *Christian*,) are sufficiently known to the *whole World*.

WHO to give us the clearest Evidence of his *Zeal* and *Sincerity*, hath exposed himself to the greatest Dangers, for Defence of the *Reformed Religion*: And though his Education was in a *different Persuasion*, (the *Discipline established* in his Native Countrey,) yet to demonstrate both his *Piety* and *Prudence*, when he had searched into, and was fully satisfied, that the *Vital Part* of that *Religion* wherein he was bred, and the Doctrine here taught in our *National Church*, was one and the same, he was neither *tenacious* in his own *Opinion*, nor bigotted to the outward *Form* or *Persuasion*; (which is but the *Crust* and *Shell*.)

But (as best became the Head of his People,) he, together with his *Royal Consort*, (as one Soul,) do openly profess our *Established Religion*: The greatest Blessing Heaven could bestow, if we know our own Happiness. And O that all his Majesties Subjects would resent it accordingly.

And further, I may urge another eminent Instance in his *Royal Highness* the *Prince of Denmark*, whose Education was most strict in the *Lutheran Church*, (the Established Religion of that Kingdom,) where the Discipline is as different from that of the *Calvinists* in *Holland*, as ours is from both; and yet from the same *Christian Principle*,

ciple, founded in the Vital Substance of *Truth* and *Goodness*, and not wedded to the *Shell* and *Shadow*, finding the pure Doctrine still the same, he joyns himself with his Sacred Majesty in the same Communion.

Who both, during their late Expedition abroad, in the defence of their Religion and Countrey, have constantly, in a devout manner, offered up their Morning and Evening Sacrifice at the *Publick Prayers*, according to the Discipline established in our Church.

From whence we may appeal to all impartial Christians herein; whether such as are *Natives* of our own Countrey, and *Fellow-Sebjects* with us in one Kingdom, and do all pretend to hold *Unity* in Doctrine with the *Reformed Churches* abroad, and with us too, in our *National Church*, and can so readily conform to the *Fashions*, *Garb*, and *Attire* of the present Age, and are apt enough to insist on the least *minute Particle* of Precedency (with the rest of Mankind,) in *Honour*, according to Order and Decency in *Temporal Government*; yet are so *tenacious* in their *Opinion*, and wedded to their own outward Form, or *Shadow* of *Divine Worship*, as by a continued Separation to *sacrifice* our Religion, and the *Peace* and *Safety* of our Government, our *Laws*, our *Liberties*, and our *Lives*, as a prey to our *Foreign Enemies*, rather than with those most *Illustrious Persons*, and many other *eminent modern Instances*, (who were all as strictly bred in different Persuasions under Foreign Governments,) to *embrace that holy and pure Religion*, so here established and setled among us, from the first Reformation, by those *Pious* and *Learned Martyrs*, the *Founders* of it: I say, whether this *Stiffness* and *Obstinacy* doth not arise from *Ignorance* and *Prejudice* in the honest and well-meaning, who are *seduced* and *impos'd* upon, and from *Self-Love*, *Ambition*, and *worldly Design* in the *Leaders* and *Seducers*, rather than from any *pure Principle* of Primitive Christianity, I leave all persons concern'd herein, to be themselves Judges of the Matter.

But after all, I would be so understood, That I do not design in the least by any thing I have here said, Abridgment or Restraint of that *honest*, *innocent*, and *peaceable Liberty of Conscience* (of which I have already discours'd) which we must allow to be the *Christian's Birthright*.

And

And now from all, we may (with humble Submiſſion) draw this moſt certain *Concluſion.*

THat the true *Chriſtian Religion*, according to the Doctrine and Practice of our bleſſed Redeemer, the Founder himſelf, muſt be laid in ſincere *Humility* and *Self-denial*; both centring in the pure *Love of God* (from which Man fell) which we call *Charity*: This cannot be hid, but naturally (like the Sun) darts forth its influence in *Love* to *our Fellow-Creatures*, cauſing us to love as God loves, for Goodneſs-ſake; and from thence, to love *our Neighbour as our ſelf*, which is directly oppoſite to *Concupiſcence* or *Self-love*, the Fountain of all Evil.

And ſuch a Religion as this, (and no other,) will make *good Princes*, and *good People*, *good Miniſters*, and *good Magiſtrates*.

This is ſuch a Religion alone, as will inſpire our *Councils* with *true Wiſdom*, and our *Armies* with *true Courage*, and *good Conduct*; and unite us all, as *Chriſtian Brethren*, *Members* of one *myſtical Body*, and of one *National Communion*, as beſt becomes Subjects of *one Kingdom*; ſo as to be at one within ſelves, by preventing all *home bred Diviſions*, which will moſt certainly ſecure us againſt all *foreign Force*; when with Comfort we may truly ſay, *God being with us, who can be againſt us.*

And now I appeal to all impartial Chriſtians of what Perſuaſion ſoever, that have ſo examined and tried, as to be competent, and capable Judges of Truth herein, Whether any *eſtabliſhed Religion* on the face of the whole Earth comes ſo near this Standard, as that of *our National Church.*

O bleſſed, and happy 44 Years Reign of that *Maiden Queen*, in *Piety*, *Sobriety*, and *righteous dealing* one towards another, in *Harmony* of Hears and *Divine Worſhip*, without the leaſt *Blending*, or *Mixture* of any other *way of Worſhip*, *Diſcipline*, or *Teacher*, but what was ſo ordained, ſettled, and eſtabliſhed from the Standard of the holy Scriptures, in this our *National Church*, by thoſe *pious Founders* and *holy Martyrs*, our triumphant *Witneſſes now with God.*

And laſt of all, to the end theſe my *weak Endeavours* may prove ſucceſsful, I ſhall cloſe the *Layman's Religion* with one *Prayer* contained in our *Liturgy*, and a few brief Paragraphs out of the *Litany* of our *eſtabliſhed Diſcipline*, as a farther part of that Standard, ſo ſuited to all Capacities, that all may ſee our Charity extended to the whole Race of Mankind, without partial regard, either to *peculiar Encloſures*, or *Excluſion* of any. And ſo I do moſt humbly beg all that love and fear God, (as they caſt their Eye with an impartial Mind

Mind on these Lines) to join with me in humble Prayer to Almighty God herein:

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all Mankind: We humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of Men, That thou wouldst be pleased to make thy Ways known unto them, thy saving Health unto all Nation: More especially we pray for the good Estate of the Catholick Church, That it may be so guided, and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of Truth; and hold the Faith, in Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and Righteousness of Life: Finally, we commend to thy Fatherly Goodness all those who are any ways afflicted or distressed, in Mind, Body, or Estate; That it may please thee to comfort and relieve them according to their several Necessities, giving them Patience under their Sufferings, and a happy Issue out of all their Afflictions. And this we beg for Jesus Christ his sake, Amen.

Against *Worldly Design* and *Debauchery*, the Sin of the *Professor* and the *Profane*, as the two Extremes, that poison and choke all *Religion* and *Morality*.

FRom all *Blindness of Heart*; from *Pride*, *vain Glory*, and *Hypocrisie*; from *Envy*, *Hatred*, *Malice*, and all *Uncharitableness*.

From *Fornication*, and all other *deadly Sin*; from all the Deceipts of the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*.

From all *Sedition*, *privy Conspiracy*, and *Rebellion*; from all *false Doctrine*, *Heresie*, and *Schism*; from *hardness of Heart*, and *Contempt* of thy *Word* and *Commandment*,

Good Lord deliver us.

For Universal Peace and Charity; and for Grace, and Guidance of God's Spirit, that we may serve him acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear.

THat it may please thee to give to all Nations *Unity*, *Peace*, and *Concord*.

That it may please thee to give thy People *Encrease* of *Grace*, to *hear meekly thy Word*, and to receive it with *pure Affection*, and to bring forth *the Fruits of the Spirit*.

That

That it may pleaſe thee, to bring into *the Way of Truth* all ſuch as have *erred*, and are *deceived*.

That it may pleaſe thee to *forgive* our *Enemies*, *Perſecutors*, and *Slanderers*, and to turn their Hearts.

That it may pleaſe thee to give us *true Repentance*, to forgive us all our *Sins*, *Negligences*, and *Ignorances*; and to endue us with the *Grace* of thy *holy Spirits*, to amend our Lives according to thy *holy Word*.

We beſeech thee to hear us, good Lord.

To conclude:

The ill Management of our Tongue, or the bad Husbandry of our Time, will render the beſt Religion vain.

A Word briefly of each; and Firſt, of the Tongue.

I *Muſt add one Ingredient more, as a principal Part of the* Lay-man's Religion; *without which all External Profeſſion of Religion, is but a* Shadow: *For which I have a very good Authority*, If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his Tongue, he deceiveth his own heart, and that man's Religion is vain, *Jam.* 1. 26.

The Tongue *is Man's* peculiar Glory, *and was originally deſigned to enable him to praiſe God, and benefit Mankind; as we find it exemplified in the Man after God's own heart*, Awake up my Glory, I will give Thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the People, I will ſing unto thee among the Nations; ſo will I teach Tranſgreſſors thy ways, and Sinners ſhall be converted to thee. *This is the juſt Inference of the Son of* Syrach *in* Eccluſ. The Lord hath given me a Tongue, and I will praiſe him therewith.

And as God deſign'd in Creation, every thing ſhould anſwer the End of its Being: *So we have here an infallible Teſt to try all our* Words *and* Diſcourſes; *and we may be aſſured, whatever part will not anſwer one of theſe two primitive Ends of Speech, either to glorifie God, or benefit Mankind, will not hold weight in the Balance of the Sanctuary.*

Therefore let us to Day (even from this moment) hear his Voice, and no more harden our Hearts herein. God hath placed in every Man an inward Check, as a Rein upon his Tongue; though too many wiſe and ſober Men frequently wound themſelves by their too ready compliance with others (as Opportunity offers) to barter Vice and Folly herein. How often have

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they forc'd themselves against this inward Caution; either to fabricate, or to relate filthy and frothy, if not obscene, or profane Stories, Jests or Squibs, to obtain the Honour of a Fool in the Play, by diverting and pleasing the sinful and easie Inclination of others, in that which is not only barren and unprofitable, but oftentimes sinful and offensive to tender and chast Organs, and ends, at last, in some overt sinful Act. How excellent Advice have we from the Apostle, to shun this great Evil, Eph. 4. 29. Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may administer Grace to the Hearers: And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed to the Day of Redemption.

The prudent Management of the Tongue, hath in all Ages been accounted the most excellent Part of humane Perfection: And herein St. James *seems to allow Perfection in this Life.* If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole Body.

But how degenerate is the Age we live in? How far short do we come herein of many of the pious Heathen of old, who made the Fruit of this Noble Member of the Tongue the chief part of their Hospitality for entertainment of their best Friends, in the Communication of the Divine Life, *as more suitable Food, and purer Nourishment for their immortal Souls, than to eat and drink together like Hogs in the same Trough, or Horses in the same Manger.*

I may adventure to speak it, (though it be a hard Saying,) if we should measure God's Friends (by this Standard) in mens Words and Discourses in Conversation, the Devil will have Twenty for One that appears on God's part; which plainly demonstrates that many are called, *but few are* Christians.

I pray God all that read this Paper, may seriously consider this great Duty; and tremble to think of the dreadful Account must be made of this great Talent *of the* Tongue, *to which we owe so much, both of our* spiritual *and our* secular *Advantages; that for the future they may set a strict Watch before the door of their Lips, so as to endeavour all they say may answer one of these two Primitive Ends of Speech, either to* glorifie God, *or* benefit Men.

Well might St. *James* say, Life and Death are in the Power of the Tongue, *when the Mouth of Truth it self had before pronounced the Sentence:* By thy Words thou shalt be justified, and by thy Words thou shalt be condemned.

The Tongue is the Helm, by which the Soul of Man steers the whole Course of his Conversation among Men: It is so voluble a Member, that it needs not so much as the flexure of a joint, and often moves without giving many Warning; and as Children easily set those rolling Engines in Motion, which stronger Men cannot suddenly stop; so when our

Mind (which is the Pilot of our Tongue) *wanders abroad, and leaves this unruly Engine at liberty, our Passions and our Fancies* (which are the Childish Parts of our animal Nature) *are too apt to set our Tongues into such a loose Career of Folly and Babling, as our Reason cannot easily restrain it. Therefore* David, *to prevent this great Evil*, said, *Psal.* 39. I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my Tongue. I will keep my Mouth as with a Bridle, while the Wicked is before me. *And that he might do it effectually, he fixed his Mind at home, in Contemplation of his own frail Mortality*; My Heart was hot within me, whilst I was musing (*thus inwardly intent*) the Fire (*vehement thoughtfulness*) burnt within me; then spake I with my Tongue, Lord make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is, *that* I may know how frail I am.

How can the Tongue be worse employed, or the Speaker rendred more odious, than in railing at, and censuring others, when at the same time he himself may be guilty of thus, or worse Crimes, which might have been buried with him in Silence, had he not thus provoked others to blazon them to the World.

Qui alterum incusat probri, ipsum se intueri oportet.

But all proceeds from Self-love, in being partial to our selves, and censuring others, before we look home and judge our selves.

For though Men may imagine their Words vanish with their Breath which utters them, they may be assured they are all recorded with God, and shall be produced hereafter, as Witnesses for, or against them. Therefore let them carry in their Memory this short Caution to be in all Companies their Monitor.

Remember God hears, and writes down
All things that Men do say;
And every idle Word shall be
Accounted for one Day.

Of the right Improvement of *Time*; or, the great Evil of Procrastination, or deferring our Duty.

Many are gone to their Place, with a too late *Repentance*, though they daily renewed their *good Purposes*. To the end therefore those that remain, may no longer harden their Hearts, but *While it is called to day*, may (by a better obedience) *hear his Voice*,

Voice, I shall conclude with a *brief Discourse of the great Evil and Folly of* Procrastination; *or deferring our Duty from the present (which is our certain) to a future uncertain Season*: The putting off this Days Work till to Morrow. *This, like subtile Poison, kills insensibly, not perceived, till 'tis incurable.*

OF all the follies incident to Man, there is nothing more natural, or more destructive to him, than to defer the present opportunity of doing what he should do, either out of a lazy indulgence to sloth, or with a design of doing that which is less profitable, or perhaps really injurious to himself or others; so stupid and inconsiderate, as if the heaviest load were most easie to carry, when the Body is most indispos'd. The Work of Life is appointed us at our entrance, and no part of our time our own, so that when we leave the least Duty undone to day, the best we can hope for (if we live) is to double our diligence to morrow; *Hodiè operanti, crás levius opus.* Time is so precious, that the loss of the least moment can never be recovered: All that can be done towards it, is to spend what is to come better. This Life is wholly in order to another; and *Time* is the sole opportunity *God* hath given us, for transacting the great business of Eternity. Our Work is great, and our *Day of working* short; much of which also is lost and useless, through the *Ignorance* and *Inadvertency* of *Youth*, and the *Diseases* and *Infirmities* of old *Age*. Our portion of Time is not only short, as to its duration, but also uncertain in the possession. The loss of it is irreparable to the loser, and profitable to no body else; it shall be severely accounted for at the great day of Judgment. Then certainly if such a thing as the Philosopher's Stone may be found, it consists in giving *Time* and *Season*, as well as other Creatures their due, and doing every day's Work within it's compass, (which the best find but short to do it well,) and not put off any part of this Day's Duty till to Morrow; which hath already the proper Work of it self, appointed by him whose Day it is. We cannot know (the least moment before) what additional Task our Lord may appoint to Morrow; which may be such as may require our utmost capacity. *Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof* in all its circumstances. The present Instant alone is ours; our Health and Strength may fail, as well as Opportunity; but our corrupt Inclinations are too apt to increase; so as to morrow we may be less disposed to our Duty, and too apt again to put off till another morrow: Nay, we may never have a day more to work; or be rendred uncapable of working more. *Qui non est hodiè, cras minus aptus erit.*

I cannot have a better Tutor than the *Roman Perſeus*, inſtructed by Natures Light, on this Subject; though it is a ſhame ſo many who pretend to be Leaders of the Blind in Goſpel-Light ſhould come ſo far ſhort of what he taught in the practice of his known Duty.

Cras hoc fiet; idem cras fiet: quid? quaſi magnum
Nempe diem donas? &c.

To Morrow we'll do this: Alas, you'll do
The ſame to Morrow, Why ask we of you
So much? To wit, One only Day; but when
The Third Day comes, we have conſumed then
To Morrow, Yeſterday; and thus to borrow
Of time, though yet to come, ſtill on to Morrow,
Will ſecretly drive out our time at laſt,
When ev'ry Day, a new Day will be paſt,
Never to be recall'd; for thou, O Wheel!
Which doſt about the ſecond Axle reel
Hind-moſt may'ſt ſtrive in vain for to o'retake
The fore-moſt turning forward, which doth make
Like haſte, with equal ſpeed, although thou be
Hard by it plac'd, under the ſelf-ſame Tree,

12° Die Martii, Anno Libertatis, Gratiâ ſpeciali mihi abundante, reſtitutæ, 10.

POST-

POST-SCRIPT.

IT might have been expected from such a Title as *The Layman's Religion*, that I should have begun with some Preface, by way of Apology, for presuming to treat of any thing sacred: Therefore, as I have already propounded my end, and shall leave what I have written, to shew Cause why; so it becomes me here in the close, to tell the World more plainly what hath induced me hereunto, and my Design therein.

In the first place, I do most humbly acknowledge my own Incapacity, to trace many things in this small Treatise to their Original: And that whatsoever I have thus composed and published, relating to the Doctrine and Principles of Religion, or Man's Duty, is no more mine, than as I have collected, digested, and registred it in my own Mind, from the Works and Labours of pious and learned Men, who prepared, and handed it down to me and others, for the common Good of Mankind. Wherein I have forborn to quote the Authors Names; whose Words and Sense I have so made use of, to the end, wholesome Truth (which sufficiently commends it self to a Mind well qualified) may not be less welcome to an impartial Reader, though conveyed down by Men of different Persuasions, which hath been the Fate of many excellent Treatises, among such as are too apt to have Men's *Persons*, rather than their real worth *in admiration*; not considering, that the most refined are but *earthen Vessels*, when the *Treasure* is (in all) still the same.

When I beheld (to my great Grief) the generality of Dissenters, though scarce acquainted with the Fundamental Truths of Christianity, and having no more knowledge of the Doctrine and Discipline of our Church, than from the false and malicious Reports of our Enemies; yet puffed up with an high Conceipt of the Excellency of their own Way; and wilfully tenacious every one in their own several Persuasion, and so prepossessed with prejudice against this our established Religion, that they were so far from reading, that they rather despised all that hath been written, in Tenderness and Love for their Instruction, by the most reverend and learned Clergy of our Church; saying, It was only done to promote their own Trade and Interest; I could no longer bear with such Affronts and Indignities, to be openly cast upon Truth it self, lest I might by my silence become

come guilty of that, which I did not endeavour (as much as in me lay) to hinder.

And therefore, in obedience to the Dictate of my own Conscience, having with an impartial Mind searched into the Truth of all, so as to be rightly informed, and fully persuaded in my own Mind; (neither imposed upon, or influenced by any Party;) I judged my self under the highest Obligation to God and Man, as a proper Witness for Truth to publish to all the World, what God hath been graciously pleased thus to make known to me. Solemnly appealing to the Searcher of all Hearts, 'tis done, to the best of my Understanding, Knowledge, and Belief, purely for Discovery of Truth, and for the Good of Men's Souls in all Persuasions.

And as my whole Design herein hath been; so it shall be my hearty Prayers and Endeavours to stem the Tide of Debauchery and Immorality, which threatens universal Desolation to the present Age, and Ruine to Posterity; and (as the best means to effect that) to promote Charity, and Brotherly Kindness among all that make Profession of Christianity; that they may so live and act, as to keep their Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Man; the only *Medium* to render Religion amiable, thereby to promote, and restore that Harmony in Divine Worship, which, for so many Years, rendred our Nation the *Goshen* of the whole Earth; a Blessing (if well understood) most desirable in all Nations.

Waller.

Could we forbear Disputes, and practise Love,
We should agree as Angels do above.

Self-Love *would cease, or be dilated, when*
We should behold as many Selfs *as Men:*
All of one Family in Blood ally'd,
His precious Blood, *that for our Ransome dy'd.*

The End of the First Part.